

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 EA-06 OIC-02 ACDA-05 DPW-01

NIC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 051930Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7873

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 2393

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICRC, PARM, US, VN, VE

SUBJ: PRG ISSUE AT LAW OF WAR CONFERENCE: VENEZUELA

REF: STATE 41383; CARACAS 1421; CARACAS 0806

1. POL COUNSELOR MARCH 5 RAISED MATTER OF VENEZUELA'S VOTING PATTERN AT LAST MONTH'S SESSION OF THE LAW OF WAR CONFERENCE WITH THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AMBASSADOR JOSE LUIS MARTINEZ. POL COUNSELOR CONVEYED THE DIS-APPOINTMENT OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OVER VENEZUELA'S ABRUPT SWITCH FROM OPPOSITION TO PARTICIPATION BY THE "PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM" (PRG) IN THE LAW OF WAR (LOW) CONFERENCE IN 1974 TO THIS YEAR'S SUPPORT FOR FIRST CHALLENGE TO GRABER'S RULING AND ABSTENTION ON THE CHOICE BETWEEN RULE 32 AND RULE 35 AND ON THE SECOND CHALLENGE TO GRABER'S RULING. POL COUNSELOR NOTED THE IMPORTANCE TO THE U.S. OF THE ISSUE OF PRG PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES.

2. MARTINEZ REPLIED THAT THE VENEZUELAN DELEGATION HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO VOTE AGAINST PRG PARTICIPATION IN THE LOW CONFERENCE BEFORE IT LEFT CARACAS (AS REPORTED CARACAS 0806). MARTINEZ BECAME
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VAGUE AND RATHER EVASIVE AS TO WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, BUT SAID THAT

AFTER THE VENEZUELAN DELEGATION ARRIVED IN GENEVA IT WAS PRESSURED BY OTHER DELEGATIONS (HE DID NOT WANT TO SAY WHICH) TO SUPPORT PRG PARTICIPATION. MARTINEZ INDICATED THAT THE VENEZUELAN REPORTED BACK TO CARACAS THAT THE PRO-PRG FORCES WOULD PROBABLY LOSE ANYWAY, AND THAT THIS PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VENEZUELA TO WIN POINTS IN THE THIRD WORLD AT NO REAL EXPENSE TO VENEZUELA. SOMEBODY HIGH UP IN THE GOV AGREED, AND THE VENEZUELA DELEGATION WAS AUTHORIZED TO VOTE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ASSIST THE PRO-PRG FORCES BUT WITHOUT GOING QUITE SO FAR AS TO VOTE WITH THEM.

3. COMMENT: MARTINEZ WAS DISCOMFITED AND EMBARRASSED IN DISCUSSING VENEZUELA'S OBVIOUSLY OPPORTUNISTIC BEHAVIOR AT THE LOW CONFERENCE. AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, VENEZUELA IS CURRENTLY SEEKING TO IDENTIFY WITH AND EXPAND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE THIRD WORLD. AS A RESULT, IT IS BEGINNING TO TAKE A MORE INDEPENDENT (I.E., ANTI-U.S.) POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES. VENEZUELA'S NEW INDEPENDENCE, WHICH WILL CAUSE THE GOV TO BECOME A LESS RELIABLE SUPPORTER OF GENERAL U.S. INTERESTS IN INTERNATIONAL BODIES THAN IN THE PAST, MUST BE TAKEN CAREFULLY INTO ACCOUNT BY THE USG IN THE FUTURE.
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